

REMARKS

Claims 1-2 and 4-15 are pending. By this Amendment, claims 1, 7, 14 and 15 are amended and claim 3 is canceled. No new matter has been added. Reconsideration in view of the above amendments and following remarks is respectfully requested. Applicant respectfully submits that this application is in condition for allowance.

Applicant gratefully acknowledges that the Office Action indicates that claims 4-14 are allowed and claim 3 is allowable.

I. DECEMBER 19, 2000 INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Applicant has not yet received from the Examiner a copy of the December 19, 2000 Form PTO-1449 initialed to acknowledge the fact that the Examiner has considered the disclosed information. The Examiner is requested to initial and return to the undersigned a copy the December 19, 200 Form PTO-1449. For the convenience of the Examiner, a copy of that form is attached.

II. THE CLAIMS DEFINE PATENTABLE SUBJECT MATTER

The Office Action rejects claims 1-2 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over WO 98/52879 to Ohashi et al.; and rejects claim 15 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Ohashi et al. These rejections are moot.

Claim 1 has been amended to include all of the features of allowable claim 3. Thus, claims 2 and 15 which depend from claim 1 are also allowable.

III. INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

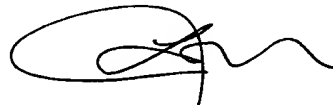
Applicant submits in the company Information Disclosure Statement and reference for consideration by the Examiner.

IV. CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully submits that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's undersigned representative at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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MAC:RZE/jth

Attachments:

December 19, 2000 Form PTO-1449
Petition for Extension of Time
Information Disclosure Statement

Date: May 9, 2003

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